In the Claims:

Please amend original claims 1-4 and add new claim 5 as follows:

Claim 1 (currently amended) A process ~~Process~~ for the production of nitric acid with a concentration of 50 to 76% from ammonia and oxygen-bearing gas under pressure, using the mono or dual pressure process, ~~characterised in that~~ wherein

- the expansion of the tail gas takes place in at least two steps, thereby converting the gas to energy,
- the said configuration provides for a device arranged between each pair of expansion units and intended for heating the expanded tail gas to a temperature of >450°C, the said system exploiting the waste heat from the nitric acid production process.

Claim 2 (currently amended) The process ~~Process~~ according to claim ~~No.~~ 1, ~~characterised in that the invention provides for~~ comprising a gas inlet temperature of 500 to 600°C, ~~preferably 535°C~~ for the expansion steps, thereby supplying drive energy to further consumers.

Claim 3 (currently amended) The process ~~Process~~ according to ~~one of the preceding claims, characterised in that it is intended to use~~ claim 1, wherein the surplus drive energy is provided to ~~for~~ a generator in order to produce electric power.

Claim 4 (currently amended) The process ~~Process~~ according to claim 3, ~~characterised in that~~ wherein a motor-generator set is used as the output of said machine is sufficient to ensure the compression drive at the plant startup.

Claim 5 (new) The process according to claim 2, wherein the gas inlet temperature is 535°C for the expansion steps.